

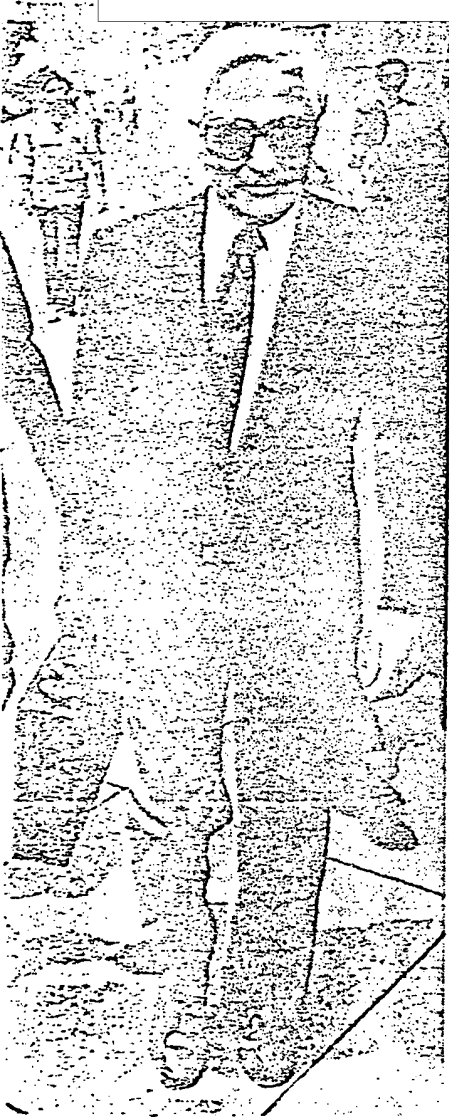
WEEK  
LY 1975

It was a forlorn hope. In the six months since the first reports broke of the CIA's illegal domestic snooping and ties to foreign assassination plots, the agency has become fair game for fourteen official inquiries—by the Rockefeller commission, a dozen Congressional units and the Department of Justice—and the resulting exposure to daylight has been as uncomfortable as it was unaccustomed. There was an unexpectedly stout defense of the agency on the Hill last week by Senate liberal William Proxmire, who said the CIA's intelligence on Communist forces was "absolutely essential" in evaluating—and cutting back—Pentagon weapons requests. But another liberal, Minnesota's Walter Mondale, said he had found "a lot of incompetence" in the agency's operations. Singling out the web of abortive plans involving underworld figures in attempts on the life of Fidel Castro, Mondale said: "I think the Mafia would be broke if it conducted all its business that way."

The continuing spotlight clearly bothers the agency, and Colby last week seemed to take a tougher stance under questioning by Abzug. "The essential secrets of the intelligence trade must be protected," said the CIA chief. He admitted ordering the destruction two years ago of some records on CIA domestic surveillance, but tartly denied he had considered them evidence of "criminal activity."

**CHAOS:** Colby also refused to identify the Congressional campaign in which—according to the Rockefeller study—an undercover agent from the CIA's "Operation CHAOS" had served as an adviser and sent back reports to the agency. "I have no intention of exposing an agent [now working] overseas," he said. Confirming that the CIA had files on 75 members of Congress, he explained that many of them had voluntarily assisted the agency somehow—but warned that the CIA did not consider other congressmen immune from investigation overseas if they had contacted any group "that was a legitimate target of this agency."

Just how fully congressmen would be able to pursue their own legitimate interest in the CIA remained to be seen. A fractious House Select Committee on Intelligence had yet to pull itself together for a promised investigation. A similar select panel in the Senate was making stumbling progress behind closed doors; last week, the committee heard alleged mobster John Roselli embellish earlier reports of Mafia cooperation in plots to assassinate Castro. But with only limited access to national-security documents from the Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson years, chairman Frank Church and his members were unable to trace the chain



Roselli: Help from the Mafia



Abzug: Inquisition for a spymaster



Photo by Wally McNamee/Newsweek

Colby: "The essential secrets must be protected"

### THE CIA: The Light of Day

Like a tired prizefighter, CIA director William Colby stared up from the witness table at his tormentor. For an hour and a half, Colby had been badgered and fumed at by New York Congresswoman Bella Abzug for failing to be more forthcoming about the CIA's soiled laundry of illegal domestic operations. "Madam Chairwoman," said Colby at last, "I am trying to run a secret intelligence service."

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